

ORGI MAFFIA  
GIANCANA, Sam

## GANGLAND:

### King of Chicago

He stood at the stove in his basement kitchen, an elderly widower in sport shirt and slippers fixing himself a midnight snack of Italian sausage, spinach and beans. It was a hot, muggy night in suburban Oak Park, Ill., and he opened the metal door that led to a stairway and the backyard, hoping to let in some air. He poured himself a diet drink and cut a slice of bread from a loaf. The sausages were simmering nicely a little later when the caretaker came downstairs—and found Chicago mobster Sam Giancana, 66, face up in a puddle of blood, shot once in the mouth and five times in the neck.

The gangland-style slaying ended a long and eventful career in crime that, by recent accounts, had included an abortive stint as a hit man for the CIA. A short, balding man with a penchant for silk suits, flashy convertibles and flashier women, Momo Salvatore Giancana was known to the public as a gangster's gangster, a onetime boyfriend of singer Phyllis McGuire and crony of Frank Sinatra. But in private, Giancana had been far more: the two-fisted heir to Al Capone's empire, a multimillion-dollar enterprise comprising not only international gambling, vice and narcotics, but also legitimate business and the ownership of mayors, police chiefs, state legislators and even congressmen.

Giancana had started at the bottom, as a "wheel man" driving getaway cars. On the way up he did time for attempted burglary and operating an illegal still, and he was a prime suspect in three murders before he was 21. When war broke out and the draft board asked him what he did for a living, Giancana replied: "I steal." "They thought I was crazy," he recalled later, "but boy, was I telling them the truth." Classified 4-F as a psychopathic personality, he became lieutenant to Tony Accardo and, when Accardo stepped or was pushed aside in the early 1960s, took over the No. 1 spot in the Chicago mob.

About that time, the government reportedly offered Giancana a second assignment: the assassination of Cuban

Premier Fidel Castro. For a go-between, the CIA apparently chose Robert Maheu, a former FBI agent and Howard Hughes operative. Maheu contacted mobster John Roselli, Roselli talked to Giancana—and Giancana, who had had extensive gambling interests in pre-revolutionary Havana, signed on.

**Soldati:** By one account, Roselli and Giancana agreed to establish a regiment of Spanish-speaking *soldati*, train them in guerrilla warfare and ship them off to murder Castro. Another story, published by The New York Times last week, indicated that the actual plot was to poison Castro, his younger brother Raul and Ernesto (Che) Guevara. Directed by Giancana from the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami, the would-be poisoner made his move in the spring of 1961—but he was unable to get close enough to the three men at mealtime and left Cuba hurriedly before the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Whatever the details—and Maheu and Roselli may tell more to Sen. Frank Church's committee—the effort obviously flopped, and Giancana found that the government had a short memory. In 1960, the CIA had apparently returned Giancana's favor by bugging a Las Vegas hotel room to determine whether Phyllis McGuire was unfaithful to him. But in 1963, the FBI was annoying the mobster with constant surveillance, and Giancana took the extraordinary step of hauling the agents into court. "They follow me wherever I go and see whatever I do," he complained, and he showed amateur movies of agents on his tail near church, at the family mausoleum and on the golf course. The judge ruled for Giancana, and ordered the FBI to lag one foursome behind on the links.

By the time the decision was overturned on appeal, Giancana was in trouble again—for refusing to talk before a Federal grand jury. "Giancana thought he was holding a due bill from the government," said a close source, but the mobster went to prison for a year. The prosecutors wanted to keep him there indefinitely, but the Justice Department refused—because, said a source, it would have looked like downright harassment.

Released from jail, Giancana went into voluntary exile in Mexico until last July, when he was unceremoniously pulled out of his tomato patch in Cuernavaca and deported—still in pajamas, bathrobe and slippers—back to Chicago and a Federal grand jury investigation of his financial empire. In the intervening years, many of his associates had been killed or sent to jail; one of his closest aides, Richard Cain, was shot down a year and a half ago. Giancana himself was diminished in both power and

health. He was still recovering from gall bladder surgery when he was killed.

The shooting left some lawmen mystified. Giancana had been out of the action for years, they observed, and the .22-caliber pistol that killed him was unusually small for a gangland murder. Admittedly, Giancana had made enough enemies in his time, and the possibility of a personal vendetta was not to be ruled out. Moreover, there was a rumor "in the streets" that Giancana had been telling what he knew to the grand jury. It wasn't so; lawmen reported that Giancana had kept the mobster's faith—but in his underworld, rumor alone could be cause enough to "give the word" that Giancana himself had given so many times before.

—SANDRA SALMANS with ELAINE SCIOLINO in Chicago and HAL BRUNO in Washington

CIA 1.04 Maheu, Robert